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ABSTRACT

This chapter explains the rationale and design of a communicative English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) course using a mock nongovernmental organization (NGO) forum simulation to encourage students to investigate global issues. Cooperative learning and global education share several common goals: cooperation, interdependence, mutual understanding, enhanced communication skills, and developing learner autonomy. This approach helps teachers transform their roles from the authority of knowledge and language to that of the guide. By taking the four-skills, whole-language approach for teaching content-based EFL, it is possible to create a course using authentic readings, a video-text package, and a cooperative group work to provide students with the requisite language training so that they can be successful. In this way, the students become more involved in the language learning process by creating materials, cooperating within study groups, and solving problems related to both content and process. For many students, the challenge of experiential learning was the most important and memorable part of the course, because they could see the concrete impact of their actions. This empowering structure of student-directed activity provided EFL students with a clear purpose for acquiring the knowledge and a venue for integrating the four skills, while promoting positive attitudes toward language learning and increased awareness of global issues. (Contains 37 references.) (KFT)

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Chapter 6

The EFL NGO Forum: Integrating Cooperative Learning and Global Issues

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This paper explores the use of a non-governmental organization (NGO) forum simulation created by the authors, so that English as a foreign language (EFL) educators can encourage their students to investigate global issues. The unit concludes with a poster session-style presentation, which we call a mock NGO forum. This course, originally designed as a mixed-level, mid- to low-proficiency elective third-year high school EFL course, has also been successfully adapted and implemented at two different university settings. We integrated cooperative learning and global issues by using a version of "Jigsaw II" (see Figure 1), assigning the students to do "a simple thing" selected from *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth* (The EarthWorks Group, 1990) as summer homework, and by culminating the course with an NGO forum.

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Following a discussion of the rationale and the description of the course at the high school setting, we will show how it was adapted for the post-secondary context. The format for preparing for the mock NGO forum is flexible and could be easily adapted to other contexts. Curtain (1993) describes how cooperative learning and global awareness activities can be effective strategies for increasing language use and communication with elementary school EFL classes. Other second language (L2) classroom researchers have successfully integrated cooperative learning and global issues to have students peer-teach current events (Assinder, 1993) and carry out group investigation projects (Sharan, 1994). In these ways, the students were encouraged to become active participants in the language learning process.

Rationale for Integrating Cooperative Learning and Global Education

Cooperative learning and global education share several common goals: cooperation, interdependence, and mutual understanding (at the individual, group, and national levels); enhanced communication skills; developing positive attitudes (towards learning, world events, and the future); and developing learner autonomy. In short, *process* is given equal weight and importance as *product*. Classroom researchers have found that instruction based on cooperative learning results in significant gains in achievement, positive attitudes towards learning, social development, and self-esteem (Johnson & Johnson, 1987, 1994; Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1981; Kagan & Kagan, 1994; Prapphal, 1993). Slavin (1983) demonstrated the effectiveness of Jigsaw for creating a cooperative atmosphere and de Berkeley-Wykes (1993) and Coelho (1994) concur that Jigsaw tasks increase EFL/ESL student motivation and confidence to use English.

Although global education is a very broad field and many EFL teachers may be confused about what it is and its role in EFL education, there is a growing literature focusing on this area, particularly in Japan. Kniep (1985, p. 15) defines global education as follows: "Global education consists of efforts to bring about changes in the content, methods and social context in order to better prepare students for citizenship in a global age." EFL teachers can promote the ideals of global education, which include issues of peace, human rights, and the environment (Cates, 1990, 1992; Pike & Selby, 1988), through their choices for content, methodology, and ways for raising student awareness of the social context. Because there exists some skepticism and misconceptions regarding the use of global issues in EFL, Mark (1993), Dyer and Bushell (1996), and Cates (1997) address questions that frequently arise. Yoshimura (1993) supports Curtain's (1993) description of effective language teaching methods by explaining how global issues can be taught to children in Japan. Henry (1993),

Yamashiro (1996), and Zenuk-Nishide, Kelen, Henry, and Sabatini (1991) argue that global issues can successfully be introduced into the Japanese high school EFL context. Other EFL practitioners (Anderson, 1996; Hinkelman, 1993; Kawata & Harris, 1996; Miller, 1996; Modi, 1996; Sargent, 1993; Swenson & Cline, 1993) have created theme-based global issues courses and activities for tertiary students.

Setting Things Up: The Context in Which the Mock NGO Forum was First Developed

We developed the NGO forum simulation for a third-year elective English course having about 25 students at a private high school attached to a highly-ranked university in Japan. We coordinated one 50-minute class on Mondays with two class periods on Fridays. Since the students were studying grammar and preparing for a Model United Nations simulation (for more information consult Henry, 1993; Yamashiro, 1994, 1997) in their regular English classes. We decided to focus on environmental awareness based on student interest and available materials. On Fridays, the students studied environmental problems using Stempleski's (1994) video-text package *EarthWatch*. The Monday sessions resulted from a negotiated syllabus; students chose to do the Jigsaw II presentations, summer homework projects, and to end the year with a "mock NGO Forum" modeled on a poster session format such as those held at JALT and TESOL conferences. This involved integrating cooperative learning with global education using readings on environmental issues to provide the input for a four-skills language class.

The project topics and format were determined in consultation with the students. The first Monday session was spent negotiating the syllabus for the term and the second class for deciding the procedure and method of evaluating the cooperative learning activities. In the first semester, the students formed seven cooperative groups to research and peer teach one of seven environmental issues using reading passages from *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth* (The EarthWorks Group, 1990) and *The Green Consumer* (Elkington, Hailes, & Makower, 1990).

Jigsaw II

Many EFL teachers are familiar with the jigsaw format of cooperative learning where students become experts on one part of a situation or topic and then teach other students in their discussion group about it. Grounded in her experience teaching listening, Yamashiro (1994, 1997) developed a Jigsaw II variation (see Figure 1) that took the form of a student-generated listening quiz that involved students as material writers, collaborators, and problem solvers. From their experience in teaching public speaking, Yamashiro and Johnson (1997)

believe that students enjoy presenting information when the tasks are well-defined, the listeners are accountable for listening to the speakers, and the speaking environment has a clear structure that is understood by all of the participants. For these reasons, Yamashiro's (1994, 1997) Jigsaw II variation was modified for this course (see Figure 1). The groups prepared oral presentations that all class members needed to understand for the final review test.

Figure 1. *Yamashiro's Jigsaw II Variation*

1) Have the class form into small groups and distribute different reading passages or a different part of one large text to each group.
2) Each group prepares to present the information in their own words to the other groups. In addition, each group will prepare a glossary of key words, vocabulary review questions, and listening comprehension questions based on the presentation.
3) Monitor student groups to help them comprehend their respective passages, serve as a consultant as they write their presentations, and facilitate presentation procedure by collecting papers and making copies.
4) At least one week before the presentations begin, copy and distribute each group's glossary to each member of the class. On the day of Group A's presentation, the other groups will have had ample time to study Group A's glossary.

Presentation Procedure

a) First, Group A asks its vocabulary review questions to check the other groups' understanding of the key words.
b) Then, Group A gives its oral presentation.
c) This is followed by a brief question and answer session for the listening groups to check their notes to fill in any gaps.
d) Finally, Group A asks its listening comprehension questions to check the understanding of the listening groups.
e) After finishing its presentation, Group A turns in the written presentation and listening comprehension questions.

5) The teacher makes a review quiz based on the information and questions presented by the groups. The quiz will be taken individually.

In designing the Jigsaw II variation, we relied on the advice of Johnson and Johnson (1987), who explained that teachers must structure classroom activities, select appropriate materials and tasks, teach collaborative skills, and provide students with the necessary academic support. They further outlined the teacher's role in the cooperative classroom: clearly specifying the objectives, deciding the logistics in advance, clearly explaining the task and benefits, monitoring group work, and evaluating student work including collaboration (Johnson & Johnson,

1987). In line with their suggestions, for the Jigsaw II presentations (see Figure 2) the groups were encouraged to use simple, clear sentences and to:

1) clearly explain the problem,
2) explain what causes the problem,
3) explain the results of the problem,
4) suggest three simple things people can do to help lessen the problem.

Figure 2. *A Student Example from the Jigsaw II Preparation*

Acid Rain

Today I think most of people know the name of "acid rain." I'm sure you have heard this word at least one time. Acid rain have become the serious problem in many parts of the world. That's why acid rain is very harmful to the earth. For example, acid rain is killing forests. The Canadian maple trees are damaged by it and the maple syrup industry there may be defunct in several years. Also acid rain affects drinking water. Several toxic materials like aluminum, cadmium and lead are picked up from corroded water pipes. One of the biggest problems of acid rain is the acidification of lakes and streams. Fish and other aquatic lives can not live in the high acidity levels so that they were killed. Worst of all, acid rain is a major threat to human health. Like these facts, acid rain problems are now what we can not avoid anymore.

Suggestion

It's very important for us to stop making acid rain. There are limits to what individuals can do to control it. However, we should do something as possible as we can. One good way to do that is to save energy. At home, energy-wasting appliances are a major and needless drain on our resources. I think there are a lot of ways to save those energy. The less energy we use, the less coal those power plants will have to burn. We must remember it.

Vocabulary List

defunct	no longer existing; dead or extinct
toxic materials	poisonous elements
acidification	something has changed in to acidity
aquatic	growing or living in water
threat	an indication of imminent danger, harm

Vocabulary Questions

What do you call something growing or living in the water? aquatic lives
What is the meaning of "defunct"? no longer existing; dead
What is the meaning of "threat"? danger; harm

[Listening Comprehension] Questions

What is killed by the acid rain? forests
What has happened by the acidification of lakes and streams?
Fish and other aquatic lives in those lake and streams die.

Then, each group prepared a glossary from their script containing 20 or more key words two weeks before the presentations begin, so that copies of each glossary could be distributed to each class member. In addition, each group prepared a vocabulary review test with ten questions to ensure that the listeners study the glossary before the oral presentation and ten listening comprehension questions to encourage the other groups to listen and use listening strategies to clarify their understanding, if necessary.

In preparing for the presentations, each member first skimmed the two reading passages for the group's particular environmental issue. After this initial reading, the group members were instructed to discuss the reading to determine how well they understood the passages, to share their previous knowledge about the topic, to decide how they would approach the task of reading the passage for better comprehension, and how to organize the oral presentation tasks. For example, in one group, all of the members worked together while reading the text, sharing the burden of looking up words and discussing their understanding throughout the two passages. Then, the whole group together brainstormed the thesis and the meaning of the main subsections of the presentation and continued working together in the writing of the oral presentation and questions. Another group divided the passage among its members from the beginning, so that each member was the expert for her/his part. Each person looked up the key words and explained her/his words and section of the passage during the reading comprehension phase. They subsequently wrote that part of the presentation and the questions related to that particular section independently, but later the whole group discussed the entire presentation as they revised the final version together.

Despite the differences in individual task assignments within each group, they had to decide as a whole how to write the presentation to make it interesting and understandable to the other groups. From reading the assigned passages, the students needed to summarize the readings to provide the teacher with a comprehension check. Then, the students wrote their presentations preparing visual aids and handouts, such as the glossary and vocabulary review questions, and the listening comprehension questions. The students decided their presentation roles to ensure that each person had a speaking responsibility either as a presenter or question asker. Although each presentation would be spoken aloud two times, the listeners were encouraged to use speech modification requests (e.g., "Please speak louder."), so that they could better comprehend and take better notes during each presentation.

Although the presentations themselves involve substantial preparation, asking and answering the review questions perhaps placed the greatest cognitive demands on the students. The class discussed the types of questions to make for the listening comprehension questions, in particular the differences between "closed" questions, such as true/false, short-answer, and multiple-choice which are typi-

cally used to check comprehension, and the more "open" questions using "Wh" questions that can stimulate discussion, but which are more subjective when deciding if the answers are correct. This discussion was helpful in raising student awareness as they decided the types of questions to include for their listening comprehension questions. Each group developed a variety of questions: four true/false, three multiple-choice, and three "Wh" questions. Each group prepared sample answers to the vocabulary and listening questions, so that they could determine the "correctness" of oral responses. This process helped them to analyze test questions from the experience of writing questions, answering questions, and determining "correctness" of responses. Many students reported that they learned how to analyze and answer questions from this experiential approach.

Summer Homework

In addition to raising students' awareness of environmental or other global social problems, it is important to encourage students to take action and see that simple actions are possible by experimenting with "a simple thing to do." After taking a small action to help reduce environmental destruction as their summer homework, the students reported on their project, their feelings while doing this action, and their speculations on the impact they think their action may have. To help guide students in their planning, observations, and reporting, the following study guide was provided (see Figure 3):

Some examples of summer homework projects included not using the air conditioner for one week during the summer, writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper (which was published) to encourage others to use public transportation over private automobiles, and spending the afternoon in front of the local supermarket explaining the virtues of organic produce.

The Environmental Awareness NGO Forum

The Environmental Awareness NGO Forum (see Figure 4) encourages students who may feel ignorant or alienated from world issues to participate more actively, because each student has a clear task during the poster session discussions at the Environmental NGO Forum.

The EFL students appeared to feel more connected to environmental issues from having extended one-on-one discussions with their peers. To provide the students with clear listening and speaking tasks, the listeners were given a chart (see Figure 5) to fill out as they circulated to each of the presentations.

The mock NGO Forum is perhaps the most important element for mastering the issues presented in the course, because as the students negotiate their understanding of the issues, such as how to present the information to other students and through repeated negotiations of meaning with different students in varying contexts described above, the abstract and technical concepts became better under-

stood and more accessible for discussion. To present information effectively, students not only had to clearly define the critical vocabulary, but they also needed to know how to be more persuasive in their oral and visual presentation.

Figure 3. *Summer Homework Study Guide*

Summer Homework

During the summer you will try to do "one simple thing" to help save the earth, take notes on what happened, then write up a report.

Project: One Simple Thing to Do to Help the Earth

Preparation

- What is the problem that this simple thing is supposed to help reduce or prevent?
- Briefly describe (in your own words) what you will do.
- How and why did you chose to do this "one simple thing"?
- Decide your schedule. When are you planning to do your "one simple thing"?
  Day(s):
  Time(s):
- What do you think the effect will be (think of this before you do the "one simple thing")?

Observations During the Project

- What are the steps involved in doing the "one simple thing"? Be clear and specific.
- What happened while you were doing the "one simple thing"? Be specific, give examples.
- How did you feel before, during, and after doing the "one simple thing"?
- If there were other people around you, when you were doing your "one simple thing," what kind of reactions did they have?
- What happened as a result of your doing the "one simple thing"? How do you think it helped the earth?
- How could you encourage other people to also do the "one simple thing"?

Writing the Report on the Project

- What was the purpose or objective of the "one simple thing" you did?
- What were the procedures or things needed to do the "one simple thing"?
- Briefly describe your observation of what happened while doing the "one simple thing."
- What were the results of your doing the "one simple thing"? What do you think the effect would be if everyone at this school, Japan, and the world, did this "one simple thing"?
- What recommendations could you make to encourage others to do this "one simple thing," or to make this "one simple thing" more effective?

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Figure 4. *The Environmental Awareness NGO Forum*

You will synthesize your research from the first semester and your summer homework projects by designing a poster to illustrate the problem you studied, its cause, effect, and how the simple thing you did can help to reduce the problem.

On the day of the Poster Session, you must explain freely (from your memory and knowledge) the points included on your poster(s):

1) clearly explain the problem,
2) explain what causes the problem,
3) explain what results from the problem,
4) suggest 3 simple things people can to do to help lessen the problem,
5) include attention-getting information (e.g., shocking facts, anecdotes, etc.).

During the Poster Session, each person will take a turn explaining the information included in your group's poster session to members of other groups. When you are not speaking, you must visit each of the other groups' Poster Sessions to collect information. You must ask each speaker about the above five points included in the poster(s) and display.

When writing your report, use your notes from the Poster Session to evaluate the effectiveness of each groups' Poster Session. In addition, consider your own group's presentation. How would you evaluate your Poster Session in terms of effectiveness.

Student Reactions

Many students wished that they had had more time to prepare for the mock NGO forum, but more importantly, nearly all wished that they had had more time to speak in English during the mock NGO forum as this student reports:

> If we have more time to prepare it, it is more useful for us. I would like to have more time to speak English in the NGO Forum. Because, it helps us to get information of not only English but also environmental problems.

When asked to reflect on the NGO forum course, two students made the following comments:

> I enjoyed [the NGO forum] very much because our group tried to study new not popular theme—Radioactive contamination—so, I could get new information about it. I enjoyed studying it really.

> This English class is best for me. I could learn to think environmental problems in this class. Especially "One simple thing" was good I think.

It is very important to make class mates understand what I would like to say or explain by using easy word and so on. So, using easy way is very important when we do presentation.

[EarthWatch] was very useful for me because I could study hearing English, vocabulary, and environmental problem. It was the best way to learn English!

The NGO Forum and "Earthwatch" are good way for use to learn English each two. Therefore, if we could have enough time for each two, it was more useful for us, I think.

The students' positive response to the course, especially their appeal to have a longer NGO forum, shows that within a well-defined and structured setting, many Japanese EFL students can and do want to speak in English about important social or global issues.

Figure 5. *Listening Task: NGO Forum Chart*

Each student will visit the other groups' poster sessions, fill in their answers to the questions in the chart. Evaluate the presentations on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 = needs to improve, 3 = okay, and 5 = very good. On the back: 1) decide which presentation was the most effective and why; 2) evaluate your group's presentation on the same 1 to 5 scale and discuss your strengths and weaknesses.

Group's Name	*What is the problem?*	*What causes the problem?*	*What is the consequence?*	*What can be done?*	*Eval*	*Comments*

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Conclusion

Designing and carrying out the preparation for this mock NGO Forum on environmental issues has been a very rewarding experience for us as teachers and for most of our students. We are aware of the anxieties and difficulties that EFL teachers in Japan may have in planning such a course for their settings. We believe that this course design addresses many of those concerns. Some language teachers consider the single greatest danger for global educators to be burnout. McIntyre (1996) noted that materials adaptation and development and the management of information from disciplines outside of the teacher's professional training are two disadvantages to using global issues as the content theme for EFL instruction. As global educators, it is important to transform our roles from the *authority* of knowledge and language to that of *guide* for knowledge acquisition and *consultant* for language use.

By taking a four-skills whole-language approach for teaching content-based EFL, it is possible to create a course using authentic readings, a video-text package, and cooperative group work to provide students with the requisite language training, so that they could be successful in a modified Jigsaw II presentation format. In this way, students can become more involved in the language learning process by creating materials, cooperating within their study groups, and solving problems in terms of both content—that is, the causes and effects of the environmental problems—and process—how to present the issue and what the effects are of doing simple things to reduce environmental destruction. For many students, the challenge of experiential learning (Ur, 1997) within the summer homework assignment was the most important and memorable part of the course, because they could see the concrete impact of their action and then extrapolate the results if everyone in Japan were to do the same. Following this, the mock NGO Forum provides EFL students with a clear purpose for acquiring the knowledge and a forum for integrating the four skills, while it promotes positive attitudes towards language learning and increased awareness of global issues from the empowering structure of a student-directed activity.

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